

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01450 302123Z
ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 BIB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02
DODE-00 DOE-11 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05 H-01 PA-01
PRS-01 USIA-06 /118 W
-----092979 310552Z /15
R 301847Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7291

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 01450

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF PONOMAREV VISIT

REF: (A) MOSCOW 1144, (B) STATE 22781

1. THE SOVIET PRESS HAS GIVEN FAIRLY STANDARD TREATMENT
THUS FAR TO THE VISIT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION
HEADED BY CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY B.N. PONOMAREV.
THE COLUMN INCHES IN PRAVDA DEVOTED TO THE VISIT HAVE
DROPPED OFF OVER THE WEEKEND AS THE DELEGATION LEFT
WASHINGTON FOR ITS INTERNAL TRAVEL. NEVERTHELESS, THERE
HAS BEEN BRIEF COVERAGE OF THE HOUSTON AND LOS ANGELES
PORTION OF THE TRIP. PRAVDA OF JAN. 27 CARRIED A LONG
ARTICLE WITH MAJOR EXCERPTS OF PONOMAREV'S COMMENTS
BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. IN LENGTH
AND STYLE IT WAS SIMILAR TO THE JAN. 24 TREATMENT.
TV COVERAGE HAS CONTINUED TO BE MODERATE AND IS NOT
OUT OF LINE WITH WHAT ONE MIGHT EXPECT OF SUCH A HIGH
LEVEL DELEGATION.

2. THE FOLLOWING STRIKE US AS BEING THE MOST
SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF SOVIET TREATMENT OF THE VISIT:

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01450 302123Z

-- THE SOVIETS ARE DEFINITELY TREATING THE VISIT
AS A SUCCESS AND A MAJOR STEP IN CONTINUED COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION. THIS
APPEARS TO BE THE LINE IN SPITE OF THE EVIDENT DIS-
AGREEMENTS ON SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS WHICH HAVE
MARKED BOTH PONOMAREV'S COMMENTS AND (UNMENTIONED IN
THE SOVIET PRESS) CONGRESSIONAL COMMENTS AND REACTIONS.

-- THE VISIT, DESPITE ITS APPARENT SUCCESS, CLEARLY REFLECTS A COOLNESS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES IN CURRENT U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS AND DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF THE SOVIETS TO GET THEIR POINT OF VIEW ACROSS TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WITHOUT COMPROMISE.

-- THERE IS A DECIDED CAUTION IN WHAT PONOMAREV HAS BEEN SAYING REGARDING THE QUESTION OF SALT AND AN APPARENT REALIZATION THAT CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES ARE CRITICAL TO ANY EVENTUAL SALT AGREEMENT. IN A SENSE THIS REPRESENTS A BENEFICIAL "EDUCATION" OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IN THE NUANCES OF AMERICAN POLITICS AND THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATURE IN FOREIGN POLICY, PARTICULARLY TREATY AFFAIRS.

-- THERE SEEMS TO BE A DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE SOVIETS TO REGULARIZE THESE EXCHANGES IN LIGHT OF THE "SUCCESS" OF THE CURRENT PONOMAREV TRIP. MFA USA DIVISION DEPUTY CHIEF K.G. FEDOSEYEV EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE TO THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR JAN. 27 THAT PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISITS COULD BE ARRANGED IN 1979 FOR BOTH A SENATE GROUP AND A HOUSE GROUP SEPARATELY. HE ALSO SAID, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, THAT THE SOVIETS COULD FACILITATE VISITS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS DURING THE CURRENT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01450 302123Z

YEAR.

3. WHEN ASKED BY THE CHARGE ON JAN. 30 WHETHER PONOMAREV WAS SATISFIED WITH WASHINGTON PORTION OF TRIP, FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIYENKO REPLIED THAT THE MEETINGS WITH THE CONGRESS "AND ELSEWHERE" WERE CERTAINLY "USEFUL," BUT BUT STATED HE COULD NOT SAY THAT PONOMAREV WAS "SATISFIED" (WITH WHAT HE WAS TOLD).
MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW01450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780045-0625
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978018/aaaaagia.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f6a2eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 1144, 78 STATE 22781
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3799071
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF PONOMAREV VISIT
TAGS: SOPN, OTRA, UR, US, (PONOMAREV, B N)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f6a2eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014